Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2001
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- CC: Classic Chips
Rob Mahlert -- Web site

With Contributions by:

To subscribe to A-ONE, send a message to: dpj@atarinews.org
and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to
subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the
following sites:

http://people.delphi.com/dpj/a-one.htm
http://www.icwhen.com/aone/
http://a1mag.atari.org
Now available:
http://www.atarinews.org

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
http://forums.delphi.com/m/main.asp?sigdir=atari

=~=~=~=

A-ONE #0307 02/16/00

~ IBM Hid Nazi-Era Past? ~ People Are Talking! ~ Spam Bill On Again!
~ Oracle To Woo Clinton? ~ Net Tax Issue Looms On ~ Online Pirates Sued!
~ Hailstorm Battles AOL! ~ Web Filters Not 100%! ~ Juno Open To Merger
~ MS-Corel Deal Probed! ~ Senate Blasts ICANN! ~ PC Rebates Fading!

-* Kournikova: Virus In Disguise *-
-* Google Search Engine Buys Deja Unit *-
-* Court Rules Napster Users Defy Copyrights! *-

=~=~=~=

->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

This past week went by quickly. The weather still stinks (he says as it’s snowing once again!) and I’m ready for a vacation soon! It’s just been another one of those weeks. Probably the best thing that I can do this week is to keep quiet and just relax and hopefully enjoy some time off for the weekend. There’s always another issue to pick a topic and say it like it is!

Until next time...

=~=~=~=

->A-ONE Survey - Reader Feedback On Things Atari!
"""""""""""""

What do you use your Atari Computer for?

Answer:	Percent	# of votes
Games	12.22 %	(11)
Music	10.00 %	(9)
Web Surfing / FTP access	2.22 %	(2)
Email / Newsgroups	5.56 %	(5)
Graphics	2.22 %	(2)
PC / Mac emulation	2.22 %	(2)
Writing / Publishing	6.67 %	(6)
Accounting / Office management	1.11 %	(1)

Programming	12.22 %	(11)
Everything	45.56 %	(41)

Total Votes: 90

=~=~=~=

PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I don't really have much to talk about this week. It's been another tough week here, both work-wise and personally.

Work is... well, work. If it were fun, I'd be paying THEM to do it, right? There aren't too many people in the world who actually enjoy working, I guess. Sure, some enjoy the WORK... the task itself, but WORKING is different. You have to meet deadlines, answer to superiors, and all kinds of other things that can just suck the joy out of even the most enjoyable task.

In my personal life, the coming change of the seasons makes my back ache, my wife is still mourning the loss of her mother (holidays such as St. Valentine's Day make this all the harder), and of course there's simply never enough money. If there WERE enough money, the law would probably be knocking at my door. <grin>

Please don't get me wrong. I have a great life. I've got good, trusted friends, family, a steady job, and for the time being, my wits. It's just all the little things that add up. It's the 'straw that broke the camel's back' syndrome. What makes all of this easier to handle is the fact that I know that just about everyone else is in the same situation. Perhaps not in all the specifics, but we've all got problems and little things that keep our lives from being perfect.

But we're not here to have perfect lives. We're here to do the best we can with what we've got. We're here to grow. We're probably even here to do things that we aren't even aware of.

I'm not talking about a creator's master plan here. I'm talking about the way we work, the way we mature, and the way we change. It's probably why we've evolved the way we have. Think about it: We aren't the biggest, strongest, fastest, most long-lived, or even the most versatile creature on the planet. And yet we have spread across the globe and mastered a portion of it. Heck, the dinosaurs had millions of years to evolve and develop tools and such, yet they failed to do so. We, as a species, have had a hundred thousand years at most, and we've gotten to the point of changing the climatology of the planet, mastering electronics and even the atom itself. The 'why' of it is something we may never know, but it won't be

for lack of asking questions.

Let’s get on with the news, hints, tips, and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Joshua Kaijankoski asks about his C-Lab Falcon:

"I recently acquired a C-Lab Falcon MKII from germany. Haven’t received it yet though. I just want to know what you guys think of it. I know it’s different in many ways from the standard Atari Falcon. Is it good for upgrading and accelerating? What should I look out for? I guess it doesn’t have an IDE port on it either so how hard is it to come by 2.5" SCSI drives or 2.5" -> 3.5" adaptors? If you have any experience or comments on it please let me know."

Michael Schwingen tells Joshua:

"The MKII is the same PCB as the standard falcon, with the same components, except that the modifications in the analog audio section which atari described were already done at the factory (removed bass-boost etc.).

Everything else is just like on any other falcon board: internal 44pin/2mm IDE connector (for 2.5" disk), external HD SCSI-2.

IDE adapters for 3.5" disks run around 10DM here in Germany."

Carey Christenson asks about a program author:

"I still have not found out if the EVEREST programmer still lives at the address on his title page. Not to mention I want to get that annoying title screen off of my program. So if anyone could help so few of us could pay our contributions we would all appreciate it."

JI Logan tells Carey:

"I paid my contribution through Joe Connor so I never had dealings with the original author. I have deleted your original enquiry - did you write to the address given? If not why don’t you try? Isn’t there an international coupon for return postage. That way you might be more likely to get a reply."

While there have been questions about Mario Becroft’s video card for VME-equipped machines, there have been few answers. Mario himself posts some information:

"Just a quick note to clear up a few things.

I have received a large amount of mail about the graphics card and I still have a number of messages that I have not had time to respond to yet. I will respond to them all eventually, but if you think I have missed your message feel free to email me again.

I hope I never mentioned a time of 1 month for the network version of the card, since that is not feasible. I have mentioned that I would hope to have the network support available in the first half of 2001 but no guarantees.

As it happens I have been extremely busy and not able to do any work on the card since this year. However at this moment I am beginning to make a little bit of progress again, fixing a couple of minor issues with the driver and getting some more boards assembled. I hope to start answering some mail in the next week or so.

Regarding memory, the card normally has 4 megabytes of video RAM. A 16 megabyte version is available, but in normal use the extra RAM is not really useful. In future it could be used by the accelerated driver for bitmap/font caching or similar, but this is not currently implemented.

So the 16 megabyte card is currently only useful for developers.

Actually, there is a use for the extra RAM since any part of the card’s memory could be used as extra system memory. However, it is much slower than the TT’s regular RAM (but probably similar in speed to the Mega STE’s existing RAM)."

Mickael Pointier tells Mario:

"Well, I was not really saying something interesting. It’s just because you put the "contact me" email address in the "pricing" page... Since I’m interested in upgrading my MegaSTE with a brand new video card, I’ve just posted a mail with the usual "price - speed - compatibility - bla bla" stuff.

Since I have the rom-port cartridge lan card, I’m not interested by the network part of the card, but since this extension seems to be no more available, I understand that a lot of people would be interested by this feature on your card. (Is it supposed to be faster than my actual network card ?)

Someone told be that if I use huge resolutions on my MegaSTE (like the 1280x1024 in 16 bits) I will not have enough memory. I believe it is because some memory is required for the redraw management (like memorizing what is behind the windows)."

Jo Even Skarstein tells Mickael:

"The AES allocates a buffer where it stores the background before it draws menus and modal dialogs. With the standard AES this buffer is 1/4 of the size of the screen, so with 1280x1024x16 it will "only" be around 650Kb.

However, MagiC and N.AES use a much smarter method and can use much more or much less, so you’re right - with only 4Mb it will be tight. However, it’s possible to have this buffer on the graphics card itself. I don’t know if the current fVDI driver allows this, but I assume that it will in the future. The RageII-driver does this, and it speeds up background restores quite a lot."

Mario adds:

"To answer a few more points:

Yes, I guess with 4 megabytes of system RAM memory would be quite tight. To be honest I have not really looked into these practical issues on the Mega STE, although the card will work. On the Mega STE the amount of VMEbus address space is very limited; I can't remember off hand how small it is, but it does severely limit the use of the extra RAM as system RAM.

Regarding speed; the current driver is not very fast, although quite usable on a TT. The card has the capability to be extremely fast - faster, I expect, than any other Atari graphics card and certainly vastly faster than any Atari built-in graphics hardware, even when used on a Mega STE. Writing the firmware and driver code to actually take advantage of this possibility will take a while. But work is progressing."

Don Wolfe asks about what's going on with Genie:

"Genie sent out Notice that they would end their Dial-Up Service on February 4, 2001 and said to get a new ISP.

On Friday Feb. 2, 01 they sent a new Notice saying to disregard the other Notices, they would be keeping the Dial-Up Service into the indefinite future. They sent a list of new Phone Number to access this changed Service, which will connect but not link-up, "So no access"

Does anyone know what is going on with Genie ??"

'Phil' tells Don:

"Try using the old number that you original used before. It still works for me.

That Genie/IDT is one weird company....."

James Wallis asks about transporting graphics files from Falcon to a non-TOS system:

"I need help.

I've recently been given around 300 Falcon floppies dating from the mid-90s, containing a lot of text and graphics that I really need. The text is no problem, but all the graphics files are TIHs. "It's just like TIFF," I was told by the guy who gave me the disks. "Anything that can display TIFF can display TIH."

Well, bollocks, as I'm sure you know. What's more, I can't find anything more than mentions-in-passing of the TIH graphics format on the web or the Deja archives. So I'm coming to the source of all wisdom on such things, my cap in my hand.

The trouble is, I don't have an ST. I'm reading these disks on a PC, and I need the graphics in a format that either a PC or Mac can read. TIFF would be nice. EPS, PIC, PCX or GIF are all acceptable.

So -- what are my options? Does anyone in the UK offer this kind of service commercially? (Sadly we're on a budget for this.) Is there software available which can convert TIH files, either PC-native, or

running under an ST-emulator? For that matter, is there ST software that can convert TIH files to a cross-platform standard format? If so, is my only hope to find an ST running this software? Or have I missed an option?

Any and all help would be very greatly appreciated."

Peter West tells James:

"TIHs were greyscale TIFFs, used by some Digital Arts programs such as DA's Vector and DA's Layout and possibly some other programs. I have the former but haven't ever used it, and certainly couldn't undertake such a large-scale conversion. I find it hard to believe that they were Atari-only, but it's possible.

Have you tried renaming them to TIF to see if one of your PC programs can read them?"

James tells Peter:

"Yes, and no, in that order.

Many thanks for the information about the files' nature. I don't know if TIHs were definitely Atari-only, but none of the PC image programs or file-converters I've tried has ever heard of them. And I've tried several."

Derryck Croker adds:

"I'd hazard a guess that Imagecopy would read TIH files, it has conversion possibilities to many output formats including BMP. Since this is an Atari program you'd have to run an emulator on your PC."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

=~=~=~=

->In This Week's Gaming Section - June Launch For GameBoy Advance!
Portal Runner! Le Mans 24 Hours!
Kingdom II! Scooby Doo!
And much more!

=~=~=~=

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Nintendo Sets U.S. Game Boy Advance Launch for June

Japanese video game and hardware maker Nintendo Co. Ltd. on Tuesday said it plans to begin sales of its Game Boy Advance handheld game player on June 11.

The Game Boy Advance is Nintendo's latest version of its Game Boy, which dominates the market for handheld video games and has sold 120 million units worldwide. The new device is scheduled to be introduced in Japan on March 21.

Game Boy Advance uses a 32-bit processor, compared with its predecessor's 8-bit processor, and is backward compatible, meaning it can play games designed for the earlier Game Boy versions.

3DO Announces Portal Runner for Playstation2

The 3DO Company announced the planned release of the Portal Runner game for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system this spring. Portal Runner features the sassy and smart heroine Vikki G. Taking full advantage of the PlayStation 2 technology, an all-new game engine was built to create spectacular worlds and depict stunningly realistic characters. Portal Runner is also scheduled to be released on the Game Boy Color videogame system.

In the Portal Runner game, players are taken through an engaging story line that will keep them glued to their seats. The story begins with Brigitte Bleu about to unleash her diabolical scheme to trap Vikki and sink her claws into Sarge. This plot launches Vikki on a fantastic journey through a variety of exciting new toy worlds. She will eventually encounter a new friend and ally, Leo the Lion, who stays by her side to fight off the evil forces of these new worlds. The cooperative relationship that forms between the two characters will add a new level of excitement and close combat gameplay. Players will enjoy the option of controlling Leo or working with him as a team when playing Vikki. With advanced Artificial Intelligence, Leo will also be able to protect Vikki in combat and challenge gamers to restrain his savage instincts.

The Portal Runner game will feature a surrealistic look with exotic visuals; gamers will be truly immersed in the astonishing graphics. Giving great depth and variety to Portal Runner is the addictive bow and arrow gameplay. The realistic and spectacular precision technique of the bow and arrow will help Vikki vanquish foes and remove obstacles in her travels. To add more excitement, Portal Runner offers a huge variety of environments including Our World, Prehistoric World, Medieval World and Space World, all highly detailed and deeply interactive. Amid this blend of classic shooting and platform action, players can experiment with different gameplay approaches to keep things interesting.

‘‘Portal Runner is an innovative title that incorporates many unique attributes that have not been previously implemented by other games," said Trip Hawkins, chairman and CEO of The 3DO Company. ‘‘We are definitely taking full advantage of the PS2 technology in order to create a seamless adventure. Players will be drawn into game environments unlike anything

they have experienced before in a console title."

Portal Runner’s levels are dynamic in a traditional style that everyone can appreciate. Fun and simple platform puzzles will be implemented to provide a new degree of challenge as gamers explore environments and line up their target shots. The missions in Portal Runner will each have their own style, unique challenges and surprises such as hidden platforms that take players to new secret levels. Players can also enjoy two player target-shooting games, each with their own adjustable game parameters. With four modes of gameplay and 19 different levels, Portal Runner will definitely keep the action fresh and electrifying!

Infogrames, Inc. Brings Its Celebrated Endurance Racing Formula to the Sony Playstation2 With Le Mans 24 Hours

Infogrames, Inc. announced that it will bring 24-hour racing to the PlayStation2 this summer with Le Mans 24 Hours. Feature highlights for the game include racing teams from the 2000 Le Mans race, animated pit crews and drivers and a new track from the US Le Mans racing series.

‘‘If you loved Melbourne House’s Test Drive Le Mans for the Dreamcast, then Le Mans 24 Hours for the PlayStation2 will blow you away," said Laddie Ervin, director of marketing for sports and racing at the Infogrames San Jose Label. ‘‘As stellar as Test Drive Le Mans was, people told us what would make it absolutely perfect and we listened. Rear view mirrors, real-time headlights, animated drivers and an animated pit crew are just a few of the new features that will accompany the awesome gameplay of Le Mans 24 Hours."

Capturing the true essence of Le Mans racing with its around-the-clock, day-to-night-to-day lighting conditions, Le Mans 24 Hours is the officially licensed game of the 24 Heures du Mansfi. Le Mans 24 Hours will have more than 70 detailed licensed vehicles including 30 new vehicles from the Le Mans 2000 race. Some of the new teams will include Viper Team Oreca, Corvette Racing, Team Cadillac and many more.

In addition, the game will have 12 real-world tracks, including the U.S. Road Atlanta from the 2000 Le Mans series in the United States. The realistic physics and graphical effects such as dust, smoke, sparks and real-time shadows that Test Drive Le Mans offers are also in Le Mans 24 Hours in addition to highly-detailed features such as animated pit crews, animated drivers, advanced artificial intelligence (AI), new car settings, and real-time headlights.

Le Mans 24 Hours will offer five challenging game modes including the Le Mans mode. This game mode offers players a chance to simulate the 24-Hour Le Mans 2000 race. Players will have the choice of competing in time-compressed 10 minute, 30 minute, one hour or six hour modes, or they can participate in an actual 24-Hour race.

With up to 24 cars competing in each race at one time, players can expect the same challenges that real Le Mans drivers face when their tires lose traction and gas and oil levels drop, forcing them to pit their vehicles. While in the pits, players can change tires, re-fuel their vehicle, or they can make repairs to their vehicle.

In addition to its recent success with Test Drive Le Mans for Dreamcast,

Infogrames' Melbourne House studio also developed the highly regarded Looney Tunes Space Race for Dreamcast. Le Mans 24 Hours will offer two-player multiplayer support via split-screen.

Acclaim Max Sports Announces Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix for PlayStation Game Console

Acclaim Entertainment announced that Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix is in development for the PlayStation game console and is slated to ship to national retail outlets in May 2001.

This enhanced version of the incredibly popular Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX game is being developed by Z-Axis.

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix for the PlayStation game console features all the top riders in the sport, including both Dave Mirra and Ryan Nyquist, widely considered the two best BMX riders in competition today.

‘‘This builds on the incredible success of the first Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX game," said Steve Felsen, Brand Director of Acclaim Max Sports. Over a half million gamers bought the original, and we now offer 8 additional levels, brand new objectives, plus a special Expert Mode to challenge even the most accomplished gamer.‘‘

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix for the PlayStation game console offers players a host of game enhancements. The game includes a total of 20 tracks, a new Expert Mode to test your skill level, extra stat categories such as Biggest Combo, Biggest Spin, and Longest Nose Manual and the new ‘‘Wall Ride" trick that adds to the 1,300+ tricks possible in the game. Additional new tunes will be featured in the already jam-packed soundtrack.

Developed by Z-Axis, Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix is supported by a multi-faceted marketing effort, which includes TV, print, POP and consumer promotions.

Dave Mirra is an 11-Time BMX World Champion and the first rider to land a double backflip in competition.

Digital Leisure Announces Kingdom II: Shadoan Joins the PlayStation 2 Line-Up

The Sequel to Thayer’s Quest to Hit the Shelves in February!

The PlayStation 2 craze continues strong and so does Digital Leisure in bringing the classics to the DVD-compatible PS2.

Kingdom II: Shadoan is the latest DVD-Video game release from Digital Leisure and it’s ready for you to take home to your PS2.

Lead Lathan Kandor through over 250 locations in search of the five missing pieces of the magic amulet. With your newly discovered power, you undertake the task of destroying the evil Wizard Torlock and reunited with your long

lost love, Princess Grace Delight.

Shadoan, the award winning game created by legendary gaming guru Rick Dyer, dynamically unites interactive multimedia with Hollywood. Not only will you bring home the game to have won the Parent’s Choice Approval Award and the Compact Disc Interactive Association award for ‘‘Best Children’s Title", but you will also treasure ‘‘The Ballad of Shadoan" sung by Julie Eisenhower, which reached into the top 30 of Adult Contemporary charts. With such intense music and sound, along with classic gaming play its no wonder Shadoan has achieved many DVD firsts including offering Closed Captioning for the Hearing-Impaired.

‘‘The long awaited console (PS2) should provide entertainment for the entire family," exclaims creator Rick Dyer, ‘‘Shadoan is a classic for all ages and a must in everyone’s classic gaming library!"

THQ Ships "Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers" for Game Boy Color

THQ Inc. and Warner Bros. Consumer Products announced the release of the much-anticipated ‘‘Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers" for Game Boy Color following the success of last holiday’s Nintendofi 64 release.

Based on one of the longest running kids’ shows of all time, "Scooby-Doo!," THQ’s ‘‘Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers" for Game Boy Color is now available at major retail outlets nationwide.

‘‘The tremendous success of ’Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers’ for Nintendo 64 is an exciting indication of Scooby-Doo’s timeless appeal, proving that the world’s most popular mystery-solving dog is still a household name," said Germaine Gioia, vice president, licensing, THQ. ‘‘We are delighted to be working with Warner Bros. Consumer Products in creating a fun, new Scooby-Doo adventure for kids to enjoy on the go."

‘‘We are proud of the phenomenal success of ’Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers’ on Nintendo 64 and look forward to its continued success on Game Boy Color," said Michael Harkavy, vice president, publishing, Kids’ WB!, Music and Interactive Entertainment for Warner Bros. Consumer Products. ‘‘We are pleased to bring together the assets of one our key licensees, THQ, with the strength of one of our most celebrated properties, ’Scooby-Doo,’ to the Game Boy Color."

‘‘Scooby-Doo" was created by animation legends William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, and ‘‘Scooby-Doo Where Are You?" is one of the longest-running animated series in television history. Currently airing on the Cartoon Network, the series is one of the network’s top- rated shows. Scooby-Doo was also recently voted kids’ favorite cartoon character on Cartoon Network.

Based on the classic ‘‘Scooby-Doo" episode, ‘‘Nowhere to Hyde," ‘‘Scooby-Doo! Classic Creep Capers" for Game Boy Color sets Scooby-Doo, Shaggy, Fred, Velma and Daphne on the trail of a jewel thief. Players must guide Scooby-Doo and his friends through a creepy mansion and Jekyl Labs in the ultimate search for the villain -- Dr. Jekyl or Mr. Hyde. Mirroring the humor of the classic cartoon, the game is action-packed with mystery, puzzles, clues and plenty of Scooby Snacks.

Video Game Companies Sue Online Pirates

Video game manufacturers are not playing around when it comes to preventing the distribution of pirated software.

A lawsuit was filed Monday in federal court by 12 video game companies accusing four men of offering unauthorized copies of everything from Pac-Man to Donkey Kong over the Internet.

The complaint seeks injunctions to shut down the Web sites run by Dasheill Ponce De Leon of Houston, John Sterling of Beaumont, Texas, Byron Beck of Monrovia, Calif., and Kuei Lin Lo of Amherst, Mass. The suit also seeks monetary damages that could reach $150,000 for each copyrighted work infringed. The men are accused of illegally distributing hundreds of digital entertainment products.

‘‘While some believe there are no victims from piracy, they’re wrong," said Doug Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Association, a trade group representing the entertainment software industry. ‘‘A video game is increasingly expensive to develop and each title involves the hard work of numerous individuals."

Plaintiffs in the case seeking damages include Activision Inc., LucasArts, Electronic Arts, Microsoft, Midway Amusement Games and Capcom Entertainment.

Those companies allege that copies of their products are being given away by the defendants over the Internet. The defendants are accused of operating Web sites where computer file versions of games, commonly known as ‘‘warez" and ‘‘roms," are freely available.

One of the Web sites proudly touts itself as ‘‘The Ultimate Sanity in Anarchy."

‘‘Warez" is hacker shorthand for pirated versions of software. ‘‘Roms," short for read-only memory, are computer files containing video game information that can be played on a home PC with an emulator, a small application that mimics video game consoles.

None of the defendants could be reached for comment.

=~=~=~=

A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Court Rules Napster Users Defy Copyrights

In what the recording industry hailed as an end to ‘‘electronic shoplifting" on the Web, an appeals court on Monday ordered the wildly popular song-swap

service Napster to stop its millions of users from trading copyrighted material.

Calling the decision a major victory, recording industry officials and legal experts said the ruling by a three-judge panel on the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals could destroy Napster as a free song-swapping service.

‘‘This decision pretty much writes Napster’s epitaph. Its days as an instrument of electronic shoplifting are over," said Chuck Cooper, a lawyer for the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) at a news conference in Washington.

Napster, a company formed around a computer program developed by a teenage college dropout, was gloomy. ‘‘Napster is not shut down, but under this decision it could be. We are very disappointed in this ruling by the three judge panel and will seek appellate review," the company said in a statement.

News of the ruling immediately set off a feeding frenzy on the service as millions of users tried to download as many songs as possible before the looming shutdown.

‘‘The activity is absolutely voluminous, and if you read the chatrooms, people are very disturbed," said Aram Sinnreich, senior analyst with market research firm Jupiter Media Metrix.

The appeals court decision comes four months after an Oct. 2 hearing in which the recording industry asked the appeals court to lift its stay on an injunction ordered in July against Napster by U.S. District Court Judge Marilyn Hall Patel.

‘‘The District court correctly recognized that a preliminary injunction against Napster’s participating in copyright infringement is not only warranted but required," the appeals court said.

It said Napster may be held liable for copyright infringement by its users to the extent that it knew of specific material on its system and failed to act to prevent its distribution.

But the appeals court instructed the lower court judge to modify her earlier ruling by requiring music companies to identify which of their copyrights were being infringed. Napster, to avoid liability, must then patrol its system for infringing material and block access to those songs in its search index.

‘‘It’s clear that it’s up to the record companies to give notice to Napster on what songs are being infringed and Napster will be required very quickly to pull them off the site," said Robert Schwartz, an entertainment lawyer for O’Melveny & Myers.

Schwartz added that the decision was monumental: ‘‘It not only says that Napster is going to be relegated to the dustbin, but it’s a real shot across the bow against other Internet sites that hope to profit without acquiring the rights to the content they hope to use."

Napster lawyer David Boies said it could take days or weeks for the District court to issue a modified injunction. Boies, famed for his work with the Justice Department in the Microsoft anti-trust case, vowed to pursue every avenue in the courts and Congress to keep Napster operating.

Asked about Napster’s financial resources, chief executive Hank Barry said, ‘‘I think Napster has the financial resources to carry this matter forward. I am confident about our ability to mount a good defense," he said.

With many other copycat song-swapping services such as Gnutella and Aimster out on the Internet, music fans can still surf the Web for free songs, but some believe they may be more hesitant to do so.

‘‘It’s impossible to change this behavior once it has started, but this kind of song-swapping will probably move further underground and a smaller percentage of fans will do it," analyst Sinnreich said.

The world’s biggest record labels -- including Vivendi Universal’s Universal Music, Sony Music, Warner Music, and EMI Group Plc -- who were involved in the suit against Napster applauded the ruling.

These companies first sued the Redwood City, Calif.-based start-up company in December 1999, calling Napster a haven for piracy that could cost them billions of dollars in lost music sales.

‘‘It’s time for Napster to stand down and build business the old-fashioned way: they must seek permission from the copyright holders first. It’s time for the marketplace to begin to work properly," said Hilary Rosen, president and chief executive of the RIAA, calling the ruling a ‘‘clear victory."

Meanwhile, Bertelsmann AG, parent of New York-based Bertelsmann Music Group, vowed to press ahead with efforts to develop a commercially viable version of Napster.

The German entertainment giant broke ranks with other recording labels and joined forces with Napster. It is providing an estimated $50 million to help transform Napster into a secure subscription service and has invited other labels to join.

Rival companies have scoffed at the invitation, saying that talks between Napster and the recording companies have been futile because Napster and Bertelsmann have provided no real business model that adequately addresses their need to compensate artists and pay royalties.

‘‘File sharing is here to stay, and we will continue working to build a membership-based Napster service that will be supported by the music industry," Bertelsmann e-commerce Group Chief Executive Andreas Schmidt said in a statement.

Don’t Need Napster to Swap Songs

Napster Inc.’s fate notwithstanding, the song-swapping technology it popularized is here to stay. Programmers have developed variations that won’t be so easy for the recording industry to stop.

Want ‘‘The Real Slim Shady"? Launch Napigator. ‘‘Jail House Rock"? Just type the name into Gnutella. A Bach cello suite? Just a few clicks away on BearShare.

Though more difficult to use than Napster, alternative file-sharing software has staying power because its decentralized technology empowers

anyone with a computer to make songs available to millions of users.

The profusion of alternatives underscores how difficult it will be for record labels and artists to eradicate music piracy.

Some people suggest that it’s current copyright law - not the digital distribution the Internet promotes - that should change.

‘‘The fundamental problem is that copyright pretends that information is property," said Ian Clarke, the developer of the Freenet platform, which can be used to swap all manner of files - music, video, whatever.

‘‘The Internet is the most effective communications technology we’ve ever had," he said. ‘‘It’s inevitable that it’s going to make it difficult to enforce copyright. I don’t think that is ever going to change."

In the nearly two years since Napster’s creation, dozens of other programs have emerged to rival the top Internet file-swapping service.

Some have taken pages from Napster’s programming book. All have closely watched its court battles.

Napster was the first so-called ‘‘killer application" to take advantage of a networking structure known as peer-to-peer, which enables computers to both receive and serve files.

The idea of peer-to-peer is as old as the Internet itself, but desktop PCs were almost never used to distribute data until the dawn of Napster.

Napster changed that. In 10 minutes, a home computer connected to the Internet can make MP3 files - digital copies of songs - available to anyone with a similar setup. Other programs made it possible to trade more than just songs.

Napster, however, is not pure peer-to-peer. It relies on a central index server, which acts as a traffic cop, directing requests for songs to other users’ hard drives.

The easiest-to-use alternatives rely on software that work like Napster’s servers but can be set up on any home PC with a cable modem or digital subscriber line.

These could pop up anywhere in the world - even outside the jurisdiction of U.S. courts.

‘‘I think we could see a renegade version of Napster show up, be it in Antigua or Tijuana," said Phil Leigh, a digital music analyst at Raymond James and Associates.

Anyone with Napigator installed can see a list of dozens of such servers located around the world. Click on a server, and the familiar Napster program launches, listing thousands of songs.

Frustrated Napster fans also can turn to sites like MusicCity.com, which uses FileShare, a freely distributed software that has much of the same functionality. Like Napster, it uses a central index server.

These central servers, though only moving traffic, are vulnerable to court actions, hackers and bad programming. Some peer-to-peer file-sharing programs do away with them completely.

The best known pure peer-to-peer program so far is Gnutella, which was created and unleashed by a rogue America Online subsidiary before the corporate parent could contain it.

The early version of Gnutella can work with any type of file but has major drawbacks, including programming flaws that waste bandwidth. Users with slow modems clog the network.

Recently, programmers have been reverse-engineering the software and releasing improved variations with new names such as Gnotella, Newtella, BearShare, Gnocleus, LimeWire and ToadNode.

Clarke’s program, Freenet, is an altogether different platform. It also needs no central server, and goes a step further, offering total anonymity.

Complementary software, Espra, facilitates the trading of MP3 files and, tweaking the major record labels, allows users to donate money directly to artists.

New Book And Lawsuit Allege IBM Hid Nazi-Era Past

International Business Machines Corp. is bracing itself against charges raised in a new book and lawsuit that the firm’s tabulating machinery and its German business unit were instrumental in helping Hitler systematically identify and select victims of the Holocaust.

The book, entitled ‘‘IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance Between Nazi Germany and America’s Most Powerful Corporation," was written by Holocaust investigator Edwin Black, who was aided by a far-flung team of 100 researchers.

Historians have known for decades of Nazi use of Hollerith tabulators -- the mainframe computer of its era -- but the book sheds light on IBM business dealings and the lengths to which it may have tailored its machines to meet Nazi requirements.

IBM, the world’s largest computer company, responded on Friday to general issues that may be raised by the book in a letter posted on the firm’s internal computer bulletin board that is read by its more than 307,000 employees.

‘‘A book will be published shortly stating that Hollerith tabulating machines were used by the Nazi regime and apparently speculating on the activities of IBM’s subsidiary in Germany at the time," IBM said in the statement.

‘‘We recognize that its (the book’s) very subject is an important and highly painful one for many IBMers, their families and the world community at large," it said.

IBM spokeswoman Carol Makovich declined to comment beyond the employee statement, saying the company had not yet seen the book. However, IBM is prepared to respond should new evidence of its historical actions come to light, she said.

The controversy over IBM’s alleged Nazi connections takes place as numerous

European companies -- from industrial manufacturers to insurers to Swiss banks -- have faced lawsuits by Holocaust victims and their descendants in recent years.

IBM was named in a lawsuit filed on behalf of five Holocaust victims on Friday in a federal court in Brooklyn, according to Michael Hausfeld, an attorney with Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld & Toll of Washington, D.C. Hausfeld was one of a team of attorneys who forced Germany last year to create a nearly $5 billion reparations fund for Nazi-era slaves.

The suit -- timed to coincide with the publication of Black's book -- asserts that IBM knowingly supplied technology used to catalog death camp victims and aided in the ''persecution, suffering and genocide" before and during the Second World War.

''Hitler could not have so quickly and efficiently identified and rounded up Jews and other minorities, used them as slave laborers and ultimately exterminated them, without IBM's assistance," Hausfeld said in a statement on Sunday.

An IBM spokeswoman reserved comment until the company had seen the filing.

The plaintiffs' lawsuit also asserted that IBM had refused to permit historians and others access to archival records that would demonstrate the company's complicit role in the Holocaust.

However, large chunks of the new book were based on corporate correspondence that IBM said it has made available through academic research libraries, a move of uncommon openness among U.S. corporations said to have had ties to Nazi Germany.

''IBM and the Holocaust" revives a highly charged debate about the role of IBM's top executives, including founder and President Thomas J. Watson, in doing business with Adolf Hitler from the earliest days of his rise to power.

Black's book details the complex ties and increasingly stormy relations between IBM and its German subsidiary, called Dehomag, which was IBM's No. 2 sales territory in the 1930s, despite an international boycott of the Nazi economy.

The book highlights the statistical hunger underpinning the Nazi drive to locate, identify and classify its enemies.

IBM, as a nearly exclusive supplier of database equipment to the Third Reich, fed this hunger not out of Nazi sympathies per se but from a desire to dominate global markets for its products, Black argues.

Black describes how Hollerith machines proliferated throughout German government and business during the 1930s, allowing the Nazis to cross-index names, addresses, genealogy charts and bank accounts of its citizens. He asserts that IBM remained in control of Hollerith technology, as well as its exclusive punch cards and spare parts, throughout the era.

The book includes a gruesome description of how concentration camps used IBM punch cards to categorize victims: homosexuals rated No. 3, Jews No. 8, Gypsies No. 12 and so on. Each prisoner received a unique Hollerith punch card number.

The book echoes a contemporary obsession with the role of technology in

social life, going beyond the extensive literature written about the political, economic and psychological forces that drove the Nazi death machine.

IBM’s punch-card-based tabulating machines dated back to 1890, when Herman Hollerith, a German American, first built them to compile the U.S. population census. The devices had become popular in offices around the world well before the Nazi era. While the machines were not new, the Nazi will to use them was.

Everything about the book had been a closely guarded secret for its promoters, Crown Publishers, a unit of German media giant Bertelsmann, which plans to announce the book on Monday, a spokeswoman said. Early copies were on sale in at least one New York book shop ahead of the planned publication date.

Several Holocaust scholars declined to comment on Black’s book, saying they had yet seen it. One said he was concerned that the secrecy surrounding the project had denied experts a chance to evaluate the book’s evidence and rebut any errors.

IBM remains one of the world’s largest suppliers of databases. Hollerith punch cards are the same technology blamed for the election counting breakdown in Florida last year.

Anna Kournikova Pic Is Computer Virus in Disguise

A promised photograph of Anna Kournikova, the world’s ninth-ranked professional tennis player, is being used as the hook for a fast-spreading computer virus, Internet security firms said on Monday.

The virus struck computers in Europe and the U.S. overnight. It uses a so-called worm to spread in the same manner as last year’s ‘‘Love Bug" virus, which infected an estimated 15 million computers and sent servers crashing around the world after unsuspecting people opened an e-mail with ‘‘I Love You" on its subject line.

‘‘It’s an old virus concept but you put a pretty face and a nice pair of legs on it and people open it," said Steve Gottwals, director of product marketing for F-Secure Corp.

The Kournikova virus -- also known as the VBS and SST virus -- was first discovered in August and has been found in more than 50 large companies, including Fortune 500s, Network Associates Inc. said in a statement.

The subject line on the Kournikova virus e-mail reads: "Here you have, ;o)." The body of the e-mail says ‘‘Hi: Check this!"

When users of Microsoft Corp.’s Outlook e-mail software open the attachment, which is disguised as a photo file, the virus infects their computers and sends itself to every name in the users’ address book.

‘‘It’s not dangerous in a sense that it’s data destructive," said Vincent Weafer, director of the Symantec Antivirus Research Center. The Kournikova virus and others like it are damaging because they have the potential to clog e-mail systems and to cause servers to crash.

‘‘They spread and burn very quickly, but die very quickly," Weafer said.

Congress Wrangles Over Net Tax

Compromise is in the air on Capitol Hill, and the end of duty-free online shopping could be near.

The debate about whether to let states tax electronic commerce has grown more intense in the past six months. Potent pro-tax lobbying forces like the National Retail Federation have waded into the fray, and state and local governments are making the issue a priority as overall tax revenues dwindle because of the economic downturn.

Congress also faces a deadline on the issue: The three-year moratorium on new Internet taxation will end in October.

Last week, Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and Rep. Chris Cox, R-Calif., jointly introduced legislation that would give states taxing authority over online sales, provided they simplify the daunting thicket of sales-tax regimes blanketing the country.

Meanwhile, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the powerful Senate Commerce Committee, has been meeting with online tax champion Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., to "try to come together on this issue," said Pia Pialorsi, McCain’s press secretary. McCain is holding off on introducing his own tax bill, she said, "because it is such an important issue; we cannot risk not having consensus."

McCain is noncommittal about Net taxes. He is seeking input from all interested parties and plans to hold the first hearing in early spring, Pialorsi said.

Barry Piatt, Dorgan’s press secretary, said Dorgan intends to introduce legislation that would let states tax online commerce; Dorgan and McCain have been talking "to see if there is a patch of earth they can both stand on."

In the House of Representatives, the message is more blunt.

"There ain’t no free lunches," said Ken Johnson, press secretary for House Commerce Committee Chairman Rep. Billy Tauzin, R-La. "At some point we have to address the issue of parity. Otherwise local and state governments are going to find themselves in a big bind, unable to provide services to their citizens because of an erosion of their tax bases."

At issue is not the Internet Tax Moratorium, which was passed in 1998. Both sides of the debate are willing to extend the moratorium, which forbids the imposition of new or discriminatory taxes on the Internet. Most agree that a failure to extend the moratorium could lead to a host of new state-imposed Net taxes. What’s at stake are existing sales and use taxes that states currently don’t collect from online sales. To pass the all-important moratorium, those inclined against new taxes may have to compromise on these, sources said.

A 1992 Supreme Court decision, Quill v. North Dakota, concluded that states are technically due a sales tax when one of their citizens buys something remotely - in this case, through a catalog - from another state.

The court, however, ruled that it would be too burdensome to force merchants selling remotely to navigate the estimated 7,000 different U.S. sales taxes.

The court threw the issue back in Congress' lap, where it lay dormant until the rise of Internet commerce. Most players agree that lawmakers will have to make a decision about sales and use taxes - similar to a sales tax - before the fall.

The pro-tax forces will be met by big e-tailers, such as AOL Time Warner and Gateway, and by conservatives like Grover Norquist, director of Americans for Tax Reform and an influential Republican partisan. "It's a terrible idea to allow politicians in Louisiana to impose taxes on Texas or New York [businesses]," Norquist said. "There is no limit to the amount of damage a Louisiana politician will do to a New York business."

Given the relatively small percentage of retail activity that takes place online, any state official who pushes for e-commerce taxation, Norquist added, "is a politician who says I cannot even think of reducing spending."

Congress To Take on Spam Again

The U.S. Congress will take another crack at passing anti-spam legislation this year, with the reintroduction of a bill that provides criminal penalties for companies that send unsolicited commercial e-mail and gives Internet service providers (ISPs) the right to sue those who send spam over their networks.

Anti-spam activists, who have been lobbying for the laws for several years, support the proposed law.

"We had a hand in working on the legislation that was substantively similar to this legislation in the last session and we're going to work to get this passed," John Mozena, a spokesman for the Council Against Unsolicited Commercial E-Mail (CAUCE) told NewsFactor.

Rep. Gene Green (D-Texas) reintroduced the anti-spam bill, called the Unsolicited Commercial E-Mail Act of 2001, in the House of Representatives earlier this session.

The bill would require that commercial e-mail contain a valid response address to which a consumer can send an "unsubscribe" message. It would also make it illegal for marketers to send commercial e-mail in violation of an ISP's anti-spam policy. ISPs could sue spammers for $500 per unwanted message sent over their network.

If an ISP supports or profits from allowing marketers to send unsolicited commercial e-mail, the law would require that customers be given the option to opt out of receiving the e-mail.

The bill has been referred to several House committees for consideration, including the Judiciary and Energy and Commerce subcommittees.

A corresponding package of bills in the Senate, known as the Tech 7 legislation, also addresses the issue of spam. Senator Conrad Burns (R-Montana) will soon reintroduce the anti-spam legislation that he

sponsored in 2000, his spokesman, Jarrod Thompson, told NewsFactor.

Both the House and Senate bills fall short of demanding a double opt-in policy that anti-spam groups such as the Mail Abuse Prevention System (MAPS) have advocated. MAPS operates the Realtime Blackhole List (RBL), which catalogs the ISPs the activist group deem friendly to spammers.

Many large ISPs have policies and procedures in place to block incoming mail from network servers listed on the RBL.

A double opt-in, or confirmed opt-in, e-mail policy requires that consumers not only sign up to receive commercial e-mails from advertisers, but also that they respond to an e-mail confirming their desire to be on the mailing list. Many online marketers have called the double opt-in standard onerous, but others, such as e-mail service provider NetCreations, have long embraced the standard.

Advocacy group CAUCE believes the anti-spam measures have a good chance of being approved this year.

Last year, the House approved the bill by a vote of 427 to 1. However, the Senate did not have time to take action on corresponding spam legislation before the end of the session, Mozena said.

"The very tight split in Congress between the two parties actually works in our favor, because this legislation has always been a non-partisan issue," Mozena told NewsFactor.

"In a Congress looking for areas in which they agree, it’s a slam-dunk. Everybody hates spam, all their constituents want it done away with."

Justice Department Probing Microsoft Deal with Corel

The U.S. Justice Department said on Wednesday it was investigating the competitive effects of Microsoft Corp.’s investment in Corel Corp., maker of WordPerfect office software that competes with Microsoft’s Office package.

Microsoft said it had received a request for information from antitrust enforcers and was cooperating fully, but that it believed there were no legal concerns in the deal.

The probe comes as Microsoft is appealing a federal judge’s ruling that it broke U.S. antitrust law with its actions in the Web browser market and should be broken in two to prevent further violations.

‘‘We’re looking at the competitive effects of the (Corel) transaction," said a Justice Department spokeswoman.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday that the Justice Department had served a subpoena on Microsoft three weeks ago about its $135 million investment in Ottawa-based Corel, announced in October.

Microsoft’s Office suite of programs dominates the market but Corel had developed a version of its WordPerfect Office for the Linux computer operating system, which competes with Microsoft’s Windows system.

After Microsoft made its investment, Corel announced plans to sell its Linux software unit.

The Wall Street Journal said lawyers briefed on the probe said regulators were also examining terms of a contract in which Corel committed to develop software for the Microsoft's new .NET Internet software initiative before it wrote similar programs for other operating systems.

Microsoft also said the Justice Department was looking at its pending $1.1 billion acquisition of Great Plains Software Inc., a maker of business-accounting programs, under its regular review of mergers.

Microsoft Chief Executive Steve Ballmer said in an interview with Reuters on Wednesday that the Corel deal was appropriate and benefited both companies.

''We don't really have much to say about it," Ballmer said of the investigation. ''We always comply with requests for information and investigations by any government authority, including the Department of Justice."

Microsoft characterized the subpoena it received as a narrow request with no legal issues of any concern.

Corel also said it was complying with a Justice Department request for information.

''Based on the information that we have available to us right now we have no reason to believe that this inquiry is going to have any bearing on the deal," said Corel spokeswoman Catherine Hughes. ''For us, it's business as usual."

The Microsoft-Corel alliance brought together former rivals. Corel suffered large losses after buying office software suite maker WordPerfect in 1996 and going head-to-head with industry leader Microsoft and its Word software.

Under the October deal, Corel was to work with Microsoft in the testing, developing and marketing of Microsoft's .NET platform, as well as on product launches, trade show events and on mutual Web sites.

A source familiar with the probe said it was started in the final days of the Clinton administration.

Mike Pettit, president of ProComp, a trade group of Microsoft's rivals, said the investigation was mandated by the circumstances.

''Here you've got the world's largest software maker that has a monopoly in both operating systems and office applications buying into the only competition in word processing," he said.

''And then that company ceases writing that application for the only competitor (Linux) on the operating side," said Pettit. ''It raises an automatic red flag."

Industry analysts likened the deal to a 1997 agreement in which Microsoft took a $150 million stake in struggling rival Apple Computer Corp., whose Macintosh-based computers are the main consumer rival to PCs running Microsoft's Windows operating system.

‘‘Most of Microsoft’s interest in Corel is not to perpetrate that (office software dominance). It had to do with propping up a competitor and creating the illusion of competition ... and to get some partners for .NET," said David Smith, a Gartner Group analyst.

Corel’s move to shed its Linux operations was likely more a bottom-line business decision rather than a mandate from Microsoft, analysts said.

‘‘Corel does what they have to do to stay in business and being associated with Linux is not as high profile or as profitable as people used to think," Smith said.

Rob Enderle, an analyst with Giga Information Group, agreed, saying, ‘‘I don’t think there was any pressure (to drop Linux) from Microsoft other than natural pressures. There was no upside from Linux."

Senate Blasts Net Name Organization For Secrecy

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the group charged with regulating new Internet domain names, operates under a complicated cloak of secrecy, charged cyber activists -- and a member of the organization’s board -- before a committee of the U.S. Senate.

"We know more about how the College of Cardinals in Rome elects a pope than we do about how ICANN makes its decisions," asserted Karl Auerbach, an ICANN board member and Cisco Systems researcher, in testimony before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

Auerbach, an elected rather than appointed board member, told a Senate panel that the group’s activities are secret even to him.

Auerbach said the five elected board members all have short terms in comparison with non-elected members, who were appointed when the California-registered nonprofit corporation was given its authority by the Commerce Department. He added that the financial records of some ICANN committees are not reflected in the group’s annual statement.

"I’m not allowed in their meetings," Auerbach said. "I’m responsible for them, but I don’t know where that money is."

While Auerbach and others testified that ICANN is moving forward at Internet speed, members of Congress -- especially the Senate -- are lagging behind, as only two of the 16 committee members attended the hearing called by Senator Conrad Burns (R-Montana). The other senator in attendance was Barbara Boxer (D-California).

The Senate hearing carried a theme similar to the one last week in the House, asserting that Congress needs to become involved in the process that will set the tone of the Web for years to come before it is too late.

"I don’t know where we go from here," Ben O’Connell, spokesman for Senator Burns, told NewsFactor Network.

Burns convened the hearing after receiving numerous complaints about the ICANN naming process, which requires a nonrefundable US$50,000 fee simply to submit a proposal for new domain name categories.

O’Connell said that other hearings, or even legislation, may come out of the session.

House members were much more straightforward in their response to defenders of ICANN’s current policies, telling the group to alter its ways or face legislation.

Since its formation in 1998, ICANN’s assignment to coordinate domain names has been clouded by charges that its decisions are arbitrary and that its secrecy conflicts with its democratic mandate.

Domain categories, such as .com, .net, .org and .gov are the foundation upon which all Internet addresses are built, and are essential to the orderly use of the Internet. Without them, users would have to remember complicated strings of numbers in order to reach a Web site or send e-mail.

In November, the group selected seven proposals from among the 44 completed applications it received. Those approved were ".info" for information, ".biz" for businesses, ".name" for individuals, ".pro" for professional, ".museum" for museums, ".coop" for business cooperative and ".aero" for the aviation industry.

Michael M. Roberts, president and chief executive officer of ICANN, said the group is a work in progress and had done well in a complicated world in which demands arrive at Internet speed.

But another cyber-activist, University of Miami law professor A. Michael Froomkin, said that adding new domain names was a trivial process, requiring only a line or two of computer code entered into a central computer in northern Virginia.

"We created a new domain name for Palestine just a few months ago, and the Internet did not come to a grinding halt," Froomkin said.

Froomkin contended that the group’s decision-making process is flawed. For example, trademark holders have an interest in minimizing the number of new names to reduce infringement, while category operators who sell domain names want to cut competition from companies maintaining the new domain categories.

Like the U.S. Supreme Court, ICANN makes its decisions behind closed doors, he said, and never explains how the ruling was reached.

Web Filter Fails To Block Some Sites

Internet filtering software generally fails to block one out of every five sites deemed objectionable, Consumer Reports magazine concludes. The magazine said filters haven’t improved since it last tested them four years ago. "Many parents continue to buy these products possibly under the impression that their children are perfectly safe," senior editor Jeff Fox said Wednesday. "Our results suggest they should not rely solely on filtering software to be a baby-sitter."

The report was issued as schools and libraries across the country, as a condition for receiving federal money, are preparing to install filters to protect children from pornography.

The American Civil Liberties Union and the American Library Association plan court challenges to the new requirements, which take effect later this year. Fox warned that the new law could imply endorsement from Washington, even though filtering packages still need work.

Using lists of 139 sites known to contain questionable or controversial materials, reviewers at Consumer Reports tested six software packages along with parental control features available to America Online subscribers. They rated the filters' ability to protect children from "objectionable material," including sexual content and the promotion of crime, bigotry, violence, tobacco and drugs.

Search Engine Google Buys Deja Unit

Google Inc. took over Deja.com's online discussion service Monday, adding more than 500 million wide-ranging messages to one of the Web's most extensive search engines. Financial terms between the privately held companies weren't disclosed.

In 1995, Deja - originally known as Dejanews - created a quick and easy way to read and post messages on an online forum, known as Usenet, which doesn't use the same computer code that powers the World Wide Web.

While opening up Usenet's discussion boards to Web browsers, New York-based Deja also created an archive of all the messages posted in the newsgroups. Deja's technology allows Web surfers to perform topical searches to focus on specific discussion threads.

The Usenet messages delve into diverse topics, ranging from discussions on rocket science to popular culture.

Mountain View, Calif.-based Google views the addition of the Deja archives as another significant step toward creating a one-stop source for online information.

Since it started in 1998, Google has developed one of the world's most popular search engines, using a method that sifts through more than 1.3 billion Web pages to list results based on the relevancy to the search request.

Searching the Usenet message boards ''is a way to look up information and see what people are saying about certain things without dealing with all the commercial aspects of the Web," said Google President Sergey Brin.

The Deja database is so large that only the past six months of messages are now available through Google at groups.google.com.

By the end of May, the rest of the archives should be transferred to Google's database and visitors should be able to post messages to the discussions, Brin said.

The acquisition is a good public relations move for Google because many Web surfers had worried that the Usenet message archives would disappear if Deja went out of business, said Danny Sullivan, an analyst with Searchenginewatch.com.

‘‘Google can look like a hero here. But the big question will be whether it can find a way to make money from this asset. Deja certainly couldn’t," Sullivan said.

Deja has been on the ropes for months. The company laid off one-third of its work force in September and in December sold its comparison shopping site to Half.com, which is owned by eBay. In the process, Deja’s payroll shrank from about 140 employees in September to 20 today.

None of Deja’s remaining workers are guaranteed jobs with Google, which has slightly more than 100 employees. Google will close Deja’s technology hub in Austin, Texas by the end of this week.

Deja aborted a long-delayed initial public offering of stock last June. The company had lost $19.5 million from its inception through March 1999, the last time that it disclosed its financial results.

‘‘We feel like we developed a tremendous asset that can’t be duplicated. Google is the ideal steward," said Richard Gorelick, Deja’s chief strategic officer.

Juno CEO Open to Mergers, Acquisitions

Internet service provider Juno Online Services Inc. is open to buying a competitor or being sold to one as the market consolidates and reevaluates the free Web access model, Chief Executive Charles Ardai told Reuters on Friday.

Many industry analysts have said companies like Juno and EarthLink Inc. could be targets for an acquisition amid the continued consolidation.

Like many of its peers, Juno has been trying to migrate its subscribers to premium, billable services as running a free Internet access model becomes more difficult as online advertising spending decreases.

‘‘I think yes, in a sense, (the free model is dead) and there are no stand-alone free ISPs," Ardai said. ‘‘Some got out of the business or expanded into billable services like us."

Earlier this month, Juno said it will move into the supercomputing business as it looks for ways to diversify its revenue mix. Ardai said the move is by no means a quick fix, but is another business line the company could go into with its current assets.

The supercomputing initiative aims to harness unused processing power from the computers of its free subscriber base so that biomedical companies, for example, can execute computationally intensive applications.

While Juno is also dabbling in broadband, or high-speed, services, its primary focus is its basic Internet service, which targets people who are just getting onto the Internet. Many of them are not likely to be interested in high-speed service for a while, Ardai said.

‘‘We see broadband as an important part of the future," he said, ‘‘but it’s not the centerpiece of our business."

Juno is still negotiating a long-term agreement to offer high-speed

services over AOL Time Warner Inc.’s cable lines, Ardai said.

Juno started talks with Time Warner last year, before leading Internet company AOL completed its acquisition of the media giant.

Federal regulators, as a condition to approving the $106.2 billion megamerger, required Time Warner to open up its high-speed cable lines to AOL’s Internet rivals. So far, the combined company’s cable group has signed deals with EarthLink as well as AOL’s Internet service.

Microsoft Brewing A ’HailStorm’ To Battle AOL

Microsoft is pushing an upcoming set of Web services building blocks code-named Hailstorm that could be used as part of a new offensive against AOL and its dominance in instant messaging.

There’s more to .Net than just Microsoft’s new XP brand name.

Publicly, the Redmond, Wash., software giant is working overtime to pitch its new Windows XP operating system and Office XP desktop application suite as key components of its .Net software-as-a-service vision.

But privately, Microsoft is pushing equally hard, if not harder, to sell developers on an upcoming set of Web services building blocks code-named Hailstorm that could be used as part of a new offensive against America Online and its dominance in instant messaging.

In short, Microsoft’s strength is building software technologies and convincing developers to write applications and services for them. With Hailstorm, sources said Microsoft is attempting to position instant messaging as a complete development platform, rather than as a limited-purpose application.

If Microsoft succeeds, instant messaging would expand beyond being a vehicle for simple chitchat to becoming the infrastructure for a range of Web services, including Web-based e-mail, real-time stock quotations and calendar functions.

"Microsoft is using Passport and MSN Messenger combined as the new key to fight (America Online)," said one software developer briefed by Microsoft on Hailstorm. "They are turning instant messenging into an architecture."

Microsoft is preparing to show off the early fruits of its Hailstorm labors to a group of selected software developers and content providers March 15. The company has scheduled a private, day-long design preview for its Hailstorm Web services technologies, said sources familiar with the plans.

According to sources, Hailstorm would be a family of integrated software components, including new versions of Microsoft’s Passport and its MSN Messenger instant messaging technology.

Passport is an Internet authentication service that allows people to retain a single login that can be used to access Hotmail accounts, for example, from any device.

Microsoft executives declined to comment on Hailstorm.

Previously, Microsoft executives said the company will include versions of its current Passport and MSN Messenger service technologies in Windows XP home and business products. But Hailstorm will take those services further by integrating them with Microsoft's digital rights management technology, which is used to keep track of subscription-based Web content. Hailstorm also will include an industry standard security system, called Kerberos.

"Hailstorm will give you user identity and location," the developer continued. "It can be hosted on any version of Windows, or even on Windows CE. (Hailstorm) will let your applications, like e-mail, stock portfolio and other things, follow you wherever you log on."

Hailstorm won't be the first .Net product shipped by Microsoft; it describes its Windows XP and Office XP products as part of its .Net vision. But beta testers have said they aren't sure which, if any, of the features in these successors to Windows 2000 and Office 2000 could be part of Microsoft's .Net initiative.

Hailstorm also won't be the first set of programming components that Microsoft has made available to developers. With currently shipping versions of Windows, Microsoft delivers prewritten software building blocks, such as memory managers, graphical widgets and printer drivers, which they can use when writing Windows applications.

Unlike these pieces of Windows plumbing, which were designed by Microsoft to help developers who are writing applications that run on a single machine, the Hailstorm technologies are aimed at developers writing new applications or Web services that can reside anywhere on the network and be accessed by any kind of device--possibly even non-Windows ones, sources said.

Big Rebates On PCs May Go Kaput

The days of the $400 rebate for PC buyers who also sign up for three years of Internet access may be numbered, the latest dose of bad news for PC makers already suffering from sluggish sales.

Earlier this month, Microsoft said it will discontinue its MSN rebate, which had been offered to consumers in exchange for an agreement to sign up for three years of Internet access for $21.95 per month.

Emachines pointed out in an earnings release Thursday that Microsoft's decision will give it a initial "competitive advantage," as it plans to continue offering $400 rebates in cooperation with CompuServe through "the end of the second quarter of 2001."

However, the release also noted that its arrangement with CompuServe is good "through the end of the second quarter of 2001." In addition, the release stated, "We anticipate the elimination of all $400 rebates beginning in the third quarter of 2001."

MSN and CompuServe are two of the largest ISPs to offer the rebates.

A representative of AOL Time Warner, which owns CompuServe, declined to comment on the report.

Another major ISP that offers the rebates, EarthLink, acknowledged

Thursday that the rebates are expensive and likely to be used sparingly.

EarthLink has been testing a $400 rebate program since last month at the regional Fry's Electronics chain in California, but spokesman Arley Baker said he does not see the program expanding.

"Everybody knows it is a pretty costly way of acquiring customers," Baker said. "It's probably not going to become a mainstay practice of ours."

The advent of the $400 rebates in late 1999 led to a boom in PC sales, particularly in the middle of last year. However, IDC analyst Roger Kay said earlier this month that the marketing tool may have run its course.

"I would say the (PC industry) has ridden it about as far as they can," Kay said.

Microsoft Chief Financial Officer John Connors said this week that Microsoft made the decision to end the rebates in an effort to improve the profitability of its MSN unit. The rebates will be replaced with other programs, such as the offering of a year of free MSN service with a new PC purchase.

"We have a variety of other programs that are less rich, if you will," Connors said at an investor conference this week. Microsoft said in its last conference call that the program was eating into its bottom line.

Prodigy Communications, which also offered the rebates, discontinued the program in the fourth quarter of last year because it found the deal to be too costly a way of picking up new customers, a representative said.

Clinton May Be Wooed To Join Oracle

The buzz surrounding Bill Clinton's keynote speech at an Oracle Corp. convention next Monday is that the former president is being wooed to join the software company's board of directors.

Oracle representatives have little to say about the possibility that Oracle CEO Larry Ellison may be trying to persuade Clinton to fill a vacant seat on the board. The theory began making the rounds even before Clinton left office Jan. 20.

Clinton's marquee appearance at an Oracle conference in New Orleans provides more momentum to the rumor that he could team up with Ellison, the world's second-wealthiest man behind Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates.

Oracle, the world's second-largest software company, said there are no hidden agendas behind Clinton's President's Day speech in New Orleans, where thousands of the company's customers and software developers will gather.

=~=~=~=

Atari Online News, Etc.is a weekly publication covering the entire

Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: dpj@atarinews.org

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.